Review

Reviewed Work(s): Kausalitaet und Zufall in der Philosophie des Aristoteles by Helene Weiss

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REVIEWS

Kausalitaet und Zufall in der Philosophie des Aristoteles. HELENE WEISS. Basel, Verlag Haus zum Falken, 1942. 193 pp.

Work and duties, which have kept the present writer far away from the field of Aristotelian study, have long delayed his review of Miss Weiss' book, much as he longed for this sentimental—this pleasant, yet melancholy—journey into the past. The book is a remnant of that Germany in which, before 1933, the "spirit of thoroughness" still dominated the intellectual scene. It revives memories of those inspiring years in Freiburg which seemed to us to presage the dawn of a new era in philosophy. The "regress to the things themselves," by way of phenomenological intuition and analysis, had enriched our understanding of the great philosophical tradition; and, in turn, our new understanding of the problems of *philosophia perennis* widened and deepened our comprehension of the problems we had to confront in our own day. In that period Husserl developed the final, dialectical phase of his philosophy; and in Heidegger's courses and seminars, on St. Paul and St. Augustine, on Plato, and, above all, on Aristotle, one found a unique coalescence of systematic and historical thought, fascinating to the young philosophers of that era. Even Paul Natorp, the worthy Nestor of Neokantian philosophy, recognized in Heidegger's studies of Aristotle a new effort toward the realization of his own project: a questioning of the past, in the course of which the past should challenge the questioner.

These courses, in their radical and passionate search for truth, were an authentic expression of the life of thought; much more so, indeed, than Heidegger's unfortunate activism of 1933. They were distinguished by an erudition resultant upon his long continued studies in scholasticism, and the discipline he received in the school of the classical philologist, Eduard Schwartz. The bias that appeared in Heidegger's later writings was still absent; Aristotle was put to no such Procrustean bed as Kant; and the real struggle with philosophical problems and personal uncertainties had not yet been camouflaged by the monumental artifices of *Sein und Zeit.*

Miss Weiss elaborates with great care, and with some pain, upon Heidegger's lectures at Freiburg and Marburg. Her book is written in the spirit and in the letter of her master; and she sometimes misses the spirit of his work, because of her insistence on the letter. But her very capacity to assimilate so fully and render so completely the thoughts of Aristotle and Heidegger alike, places her work at an unusually high intellectual

level. And, within the framework established by this first volume, Miss Weiss' original contributions to the discussion of Aristotle will emerge more clearly in a later essay, dealing with specific issues, which she hopes to publish.

She is indebted as much to Heidegger for the linguistic devices of her work as for its intellectual contents. To be sure, Miss Weiss' mode of expression often lacks the quaint wisdom, boldness, and intensity, by whose means Heidegger extracted from German and Greek their inmost secrets in the way of meaning. Such sagacity as the style of the book exhibits must be credited to Heidegger; and the author must be held responsible for the occasional flaws in diction and lapses into awkwardness that appear in her writing. It should be said, however, that some of the objections which another reviewer, Professor Kurt von Fritz, has raised in the *Journal of Philosophy* (April 3, 1944), have their source, not in any material errors attributable to Helene Weiss, but rather in Heidegger's own somewhat baroque translation of Aristotle. This remark applies, e.g., to the passage in *Phys.* A 7, 190 a9, which is rendered by Weiss (p. 36) in quite the same way as by another disciple of Heidegger, Walter Broecker, in his *Aristotle*, p. 55.

A comparison of my own notes with Miss Weiss' text reveals a closer resemblance between her study and Heidegger's lectures than one might expect, even after her repeated acknowledgments of indebtedness to him. She follows him, not only in the acceptance of his general principles of interpretation and in his precise understanding of particular passages, but also in her statement of the specific results that emerge from her investigations in this first volume. The summary that she gives, e.g., of her analysis of Aristotle's 'symbebekos' (the so-called accident), culminates in a sentence that is paralleled by the following entrance in my notebook:

Weiss:	Heidegger:
Dass die οὐσία nicht als fremde und jenseitige fuer sich steht . . . sondern in sich mit beschliesst die ganze konkrete Fuelle des συμβεβηκέναι, das macht den eigentlichen philosophischen 'Wirklichkeitssinn' des Aristoteles aus.	*Dass Aristoteles die Mithaftigkeit als eigentlichen Seinssinn zur Abhebung bringen kann, ist der staerkste Ausdruck dafuer, dass die Umwelt voll erfahren ist.**

* There is, however, a noticeable difference in tenor between Heidegger's and Weiss' interpretations. Even in his praise of Aristotle, Heidegger does not accept Aristotle's principal orientation.

Aristotle *recognizes* the historical significance of the accidental without making it the true object of philosophical and scientific *cognition*. The accidental is not an outgrowth of a thing's inner nature even though it may mold a thing's face and determine the role it is to play in personal and interpersonal life. Aristotle cannot but abstract from these personal and historical traits; they are not carried over into his ultimate vision of the universal and sempiternal. They are of primary concern,

Interpretations of this sort are necessarily sectarian in outlook. The underlying attitude of mind breeds 'isolationism.' While in Heidegger's courses each historical detail took on the character of an intellectual *motif*, the first three chapters of this book shut Aristotle in to an almost complete solitude, even when references to Plato and Democritus, Kant, Brentano, and Husserl would seem all but imperative (cf. pp. 10, 12, 117, 125f., etc.). When, finally, some air from without is allowed to enter, it comes only from sources tapped by Heidegger. The principles of Heidegger's philosophy, as well as the inner and outer limitations of his exegesis of Aristotle, are taken over, sometimes in a rather dogmatic fashion (cf., e.g., p. 69). Like Heidegger, Miss Weiss neglects the *Organon*; overlooks such passages, e.g., as *Anal. Post.* II, 11,—which might have served as a corrective of her statements regarding *tyche* and *anagke* (pp. 152, 164). Similarly, no reference is made to certain informative passages in other writings, such as that in *De Part. An.*, I, Ch. 1, with its interesting discussion of cause and its hints at the relations between *ousia*, *logos*, *eidos*, and *telos*.

I have not emphasized Miss Weiss' dependence on Heidegger with the object of detracting from the value of her work. Her effort would be justified, even though it were no more than a restatement of what may well be regarded as the most penetrating and philosophically most productive interpretation of Aristotle that has been worked out in our time. But, as has already been intimated, Miss Weiss' study has a purpose and a plan of its own, especially observable in the progressive method by which she works up to a finished interpretation of the disputed passages in *Phys.* II, 4–6, with their analysis of *tyche* and *automaton*. By marking out the different passages that provide a background for understanding these chapters, she succeeds in bringing out the architecture of Aristotle's system more clearly, I believe, than did Heidegger. The satisfaction which the reader derives from the systematic vista thus provided far outweighs such disappointment as he may experience at being stopped, at least for the time being, on the very threshold of the problem that Miss Weiss set out to solve.

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however, in any analysis of historical existence. Greek ontology and existential philosophy, Aristotelian categories and 'Existenzialia', are *toto genere* different, actuated as they are by two heterogeneous conceptions of Being.

Heidegger's lectures of Aristotle were full of mental reservations—expressions of the contrast between Greek meta-physics and modern 'meta-history'. While aware of this contrariety, Miss Weiss does not allow it to come into the open. Self-effacing in her devotion to her theme, and intent on measuring Aristotle solely by his own standards, she never imposes upon him; but she fails, on the other hand, to bring us face to face with the issues that confront us personally in the Aristotelian doctrine (if this be actually a failure in a study which is philological as well as philosophical in intellectual import).

In four chapters she treats first of the natural and the moral worlds, the worlds, respectively, of physics, *poiesis*, and *praxis*, and afterwards discusses their relation to one another and to being as a whole.

The arrangement accords with the definitions of *tyche* and *automaton*. *Tyche* occurs *kata prohairesin* in the field of human decisions, while the *automaton* is *kata symbebekos*: it has reference to natural processes. Again, both *tyche* and *automaton* are but different versions of *symbebekos*. Something *appresented* is concurrent with another something, Being itself, whose very nature it is to be *presence*. Because of this relationship, and because the meaning of Being is the primary concern of the metaphysician, the final chapter of the work is devoted to a careful investigation of the metaphysical status of the *symbebekos*.

In his benevolent, but somewhat condescending review, Mr. von Fritz has failed to grasp the force of Miss Weiss' systematic analysis. He blames her (p. 440) for identifying, on p. 39, the *physei onta*, the things of nature, with the whole of being, while making only, as late as p. 164, a weak attempt to support that interpretation. As a matter of fact, Miss Weiss goes to great lengths to explain just how the *physei onta* can be viewed as representatives of being as such (cf. pp. 54, 65, 73ff., 96ff.). It is shown that the teleological process that manifests itself in the worlds of art, technique, and practice has its most elementary expression in the physical world. This accounts for the prominent part played by the *Physics* within the Aristotelian system.

The exhibition of this fundamental unity, and the rehabilitation, in this connection, of the original import of Aristotle's teleology and of his theory of forms, must be counted among Miss Weiss' most notable achievements. Her "sweeping statements" manifest an understanding of the general relations which, according to Aristotle, prevail within and among the different realms of life. (Outstanding, in this connection, is her elucidation of the inner form of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.)

This understanding enables her to correlate the central terms of the Aristotelian system in a most instructive way. I had never before realized how closely the union of *eidos* and *hyle* is analogous to (and, in certain respects, at one with) the concurrence between the sempiternal (ἀεὶ ὀν) and the accidental (συμβεβηκός). While the former union constitutes the individual being, the latter accounts for what Aristotle calls the ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, i.e., the average aspect of the majority of things and their behavior. Following Heidegger's suggestions, Miss Weiss also sheds new light upon the relation between sub-stance (ὑπο—κεμενον) and accident (συμβεβηκός), the latter now viewed in a new sense as a *constant* attribute which can be "said down" upon (and quasi- "blown upon") sub-stances by way of all the categories except, of course, substance itself. Let us set aside the question whether this is the proper use of the term, "first

category"; for in the main, there is no sound reason to enter a complaint against a statement in which Miss Weiss renders nothing more than a translation of *Phys.* Ai, 185 a 31. Von Fritz's objections, based on the *Treatise on the Categories*, seem beside the point. Indeed, they seem to be directly contradicted by Aristotle's famous definition of primary substance. It is obvious that the categories apply, first of all, to primary, individual substance; and this "substance in the truest and primary and most definite sense of the word . . . is neither predicable of a subject (*μήτε καθ'ὑποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεται*) nor present in a subject" (*Cat.* 5, p. 2 a 11 f.).

Methodologically considered, Miss Weiss' most important contribution is constituted by her attempt to interpret Aristotle's philosophy as an ontology, specified into a system of ontologies. The emphasis is not on the empirical facts, but on the meaning of reality and experience, and on the different modes of being as such. This distinction between the ontic and the ontological, between *seiend* and *Sein* provides the means by which Heidegger accounts for the difference between scientific and philosophical knowledge; and it permits him to fix the precise locus of his own existential philosophy and set it over against the ontic existentialism of Kierkegaard—and—*cum grano salis*—Karl Jaspers.

Heidegger's distinction between the *existenziale Problematik* of the philosopher and the *existenzielle Problematik* of man in the struggle of life is often overlooked by those who speak of (and inveigh against) existentialism in general. The distinction marks, of course, a *distinctio rationis* rather than a *distinctio in re*. The truth *on* existence, the adequate interpretation of the meaning of being, and the truthfulness *of* reality are interdependent: and serious deficiencies in Heidegger's ontology may be traced to the fact that his life was not '*dans le vrai*'.

Even so, the distinction between the ontic and the ontological is of the utmost importance; and the knowledge that it can be made is one of the most valuable assets of our Aristotelian heritage. Since they blend in reality, the two aspects of things are not always distinguished even by Aristotle himself. The *usia qua eidos* is not a second entity apart from the *on:* Aristotle's metaphysics developed by way of his opposition to what he considered Plato's metaphysical dualism. In this sense what von Fritz says in a footnote to his review is true: "Aristotle had very obvious reasons for not using the form *einai*, which is the proper equivalent of *Sein*," in contradistinction to *on qua seiend.* But he *does* have the infinitive forms *τὸ ἀνθρώπῳ εἶναι, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, ὁ ἦν οἰκίᾳ εἶναι* (*Metaphysics Z*17, p. 1041 b6), etc., for the *a priori* elements in the formation of empirical things. And *usia* is often used in the sense of "*Sein, d.h. die Weise seines Bestehens oder Geschehens*" (Weiss, p. 52, n. 26). A striking example is that in *Phys.* I, 6, p. 188a, 14f. The fear, on the other

hand, of hypostatizing the *a priori*, may have lead to the fateful mixture of cosmology and ontology in Aristotle. I refer, of course, to the well-known ambiguity of the *aei on*, standing as it does for both the mode of sempiternal being, i.e., being *par excellence*, and the things which enjoy this permanent presence, the heavenly bodies of Aristotle's astral 'religion.'

The ontological method of viewing things is, however, sufficiently developed in Aristotle so that it yields valuable results to a thinker as discriminating as Miss Weiss. So far as the metaphysics is concerned, this is not surprising; but it is certainly interesting to observe that the ontological approach to the interpretation of Aristotle's ethics also makes considerable headway. There is something very promising in the idea of placing moral philosophy under the heading, "ontology of human existence" (p. 52, note 26); for this definition *contains in nuce the program of a truly phenomenological ethics.*

Having toiled through Miss Weiss' elaborate work, one feels somewhat exhausted, but greatly enriched and truly grateful to the author.

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The Idea of Nature. R. G. COLLINGWOOD. Oxford, At the Clarendon Press. New York, Oxford University Press, 1945. Pp. viii + 183.

The Idea of Nature is not a systematic treatise on cosmology; it is rather historical and interpretive in character, beginning as it does with Thales' and ending with Whitehead's view of nature. Only in the final pages does Collingwood offer a few positive suggestions concerning his own ideas about cosmology.

The value of this small volume, in the opinion of the reviewer, lies therefore in its masterly analyses of the great cosmologies of the past and present. Collingwood breathes life into these speculations by relating them to the current science of the day or the science that was influential upon them. The author views cosmology and science as not properly separable, and yet as not identical. Both friends and foes of cosmology can read Collingwood's book with profit, as can those interested in the history of ideas.

It is unfortunate that Professor Collingwood's death made it impossible for him to complete this volume; only Part I, through Chapter I, roughly one-fourth of the book, was done by the author. The remaining sections, like the part Collingwood completed, are based upon his lectures on the philosophy of nature, delivered at Oxford University in 1934 and 1937. The Prefatory Note indicates that the latter three-quarters of *The Idea of Nature* involved only minor editing of his lectures by others.

The Idea of Nature is divided essentially into three parts: (1) the Greek